The Mike dude by BabaO

Category: IT (2017), Stranger Things (TV 2016)
Genre: Angst, Beware, Bisexual Mike Wheeler, Dog - Freeform, Feelings, Fluff and Angst, Gay Will Byers, Humor, I Don't Even Know, M/M, Shit, Soft Richie Tozier, What Was I Thinking?, Why Did I Write This?, and like richie, but there's too much angst, can richie be an archive warning, doggie!!!! beware, emo mike, had to remove fluff and humor, i guess, i love mike but, i played myself, internal bisexual breakdown, older!everyone - Freeform, protect him, they're older and probably living in like San Francisco, this richie we talking about, warning : richie tozier, will byers is precious
Language: English
Characters: Mike Wheeler, Richie Tozier, Will Byers
Relationships: Will Byers/Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Richie Tozier
Status: In-Progress
Published: 2017-11-18
Updated: 2018-01-01
Packaged: 2022-04-03 15:09:37
Rating: Teen And Up Audiences
Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply
Chapters: 4
Words: 5,530
Publisher: archiveofourown.org
Summary:

"You know, now that I think about it, you look just like Mike," was not something Richie had wanted to hear, ever. Especially coming from his boyfriend Will.

1. What's the difference between me and you?

Notes for the Chapter:

> Hi! so this is my first work that I post on ao3 ... that's it. lol, enjoy
> I'd like to blame every amazing fic about Richie/Will that I've read, cause let's be honest byeler is my ST otp but ryers is just ???!!! the perfect ship ??
> anyway the boys are older in this, like 19-20yo and they're probably in like... some big city's college
> btw if there's any mistakes i'm sorry, english isnt my first language (lmao baguette!!!)
> OKAY i'll stop talking :> enjoy!!!

"You know, now that I think about it, you look *just* like Mike."

The day had started wonderfully. None of them had class, so Richie had the joy to peacefully wake up next to his boyfriend.
They had stayed at home until noon, Richie lazily slouched on the couch as he watched again *2001: A Space Odyssey*. At some point, Will had joined him, leaving his sketchbook (because he had some fucking assignment to do) to lay down next to him, head resting against Richie's chest, eyes sometimes fluttering shut because he worked way too late for his own well-being.

And yes, Richie was concerned, fuck you.

Then, Oz had started to whine, because he needed to pee, because he needed to go out, or whatever things dogs liked to do. And of *fucking* course, it had woke up Will, who – bless him – volunteered to walk him. And Richie was not going to stand for this bullshit, he *absolutely* was going with him – so he graciously suggested to stop by the ice cream parlor – the one in the park they usually went to.
As planned, it immediatly raised Will's spirit, the dirty junk food lover (not that Richie was some vegetarian either).

So they were there, sitting on a bench like some grannies with ice cream in their hands while Oz was running around. The weather had to be cold enough to freeze Richie's balls, but, *hey*, he could sacrifice

that for Will who knew how to warm them *pretty* quickly.
As always, the conversation flowed naturally between them, laughing and bickering about meaningless little things ("I ASSURE you that chocolate is better, Richie", "Not what you said when you swallowed last night, hon", "Oh my god, shut up").

The topic had eventually derived from "do dicks taste all the same", to talking about their hometowns. It had started with small anecdotes from Richie, (who hilariously recounted that one time he stumbled upon Bill and Stan jerking each other off) to Will, who talked about his best friends and their adventures with such fondness that Richie had stopped for a moment doing dirty jokes just to burn into his retina the way Will smiled *(warm and blinding)*.
And then, came the innocent comment from Will, soft eyes turned towards Richie like he wasn't just shaking his whole world upside down by a simple sentence.

"You know, now that I think about it, you look *just* like Mike."

Who the fuck was *Mike* ?
Oh *no*.
Oh *nooo*. Of *course* he knew *Mike*. Just not under this name – Mike was *THE* best friend. He was Will's very *first* and *only BFF*.

The kind of best friend you get in kindergarden – the kind of best friend that you kiss because "we *gotta* pratice for girls", who took baths with Will and saw his dick like it was *no* big deal, the kind of best friend Will had a crush on when he was younger and broke his heart because the asshole *could not* not fall in love with the first girl that wasn't his sister or his mother.

That kind of best friend.

So, yeah, maybe Richie was a *little* bitter. But who cared ?! This best friend guy *had* to be an asshole.
But now.
For fuck's sake, this *douchebag* had the *audacity* to look like him ?
Of course, Will had to be exaggerating – *nobody* could be as *perfect* as Richie – he had to be *way* better looking than him – *obviously*. But still. It struck.
And *no*, Richie was not sulking, okay?!

…
He'll just have to be better than this Mike dude, *right*!?

Notes for the Chapter:

this is it!! feel free to leave some kind of review if you want to
I eventually might continue this, i dunno yea
ummmh did everyone notice the dog ???? the doggie. yes. This is Oz, he's a good boy. Oz is actually a great dane, which can stay in a flat without problem (surprising i know???) Richie probably got it for Will because they love each other

Anyway, thanks for reading this ??? love <3

2. Countdown

Notes for the Chapter:

> Alright guys ! I finally decided to make this (whatever it is) longer than it has to be .... so ... there ! I don't really know where this is going, but enjoy
> ps : I proofread it several time, but i don't have a beta so you can expect some mistakes ! sorry <3

So, *eventually*, they meet.

It's 3 in the morning, and Richie's driving Will back to his mom's house when it happens.
Usually, it isn't like this – Richie *hates* driving. So, usually, it's William at the wheel, tapping on it and bobbing his head along to some song that's blasting on the radio.

But, since they're in Will's little hometown, his boyfriend had took it upon himself to show Richie the local nightclub ; Will had said that he just wanted to have a good time with him, but Richie suspects that he solely needed to get wasted *one more time* before playing some boy that had never touched alcohol in front of his mother.
He suspects it's because of his father, too, that Will doesn't want his mother to see him drinking.

Richie himself had never been fond of alcohol. It has history in his family, and he suppose that's why he can't really get past two beers without feeling sick.

It's not the *alcohol-kind-of-sick*, but something deeper, and he's glad that without talking about it to Will his boyfriend seems to understand, and never pushes him to drink.
And yet, Will is not much of a drinker, either. He's nevertheless not a lightweight, and can *somehow* still talk about politics after nine vodka shots ; so he mostly drinks to get wasted, and *after* tries to seduce Richie into fucking the ever-loving shit out of him. Which usually works.

It's nice, because Will's a happy and soft drunk, talking to *trees* and

sometimes Richie's *dick* like it can answer something like : "I'm really hard, please suck me off !". Most of the time, Will manages to get himself in impossible situations, and then it makes Richie laugh for days. So, yeah. It soothes Richie, seeing how calm and nice Will is, while all he can remember from his mom is *screaming* and bottles breaking against walls.

Thus, Richie's driving Will back to his childhood home. It's dark, and Richie's focused because he forgot his lenses back home, so he has to deal with his old pair of glasses. The correction is a little off, and he has to squint to properly see some things that are far away. Next to him, Will's half-laying half-sitting on his seat, head against the window. He looks dazed, occasionally mumbling things and alterning between holding Richie's free hand and pointing at the forest outside like some kind of fucking tour guide.

There's a *The Clash* song on the radio, because Will begged him to put it on and Richie's weak. But whatever, it's totally worth it. Will being happy is probably something more vital to Richie's life than oxygen anyway, so even if it isn't *The King* singing, it's more than okay. Plus,*The Clash* aren't too bad. Not that he'll ever admit that to Will.

It feels like a lifetime has passed when they finally arrive. Richie has possibly seen enough trees to become fucking *blind*, and he rubs his eyes tiredly, stepping out of the car like he's seventy years old and not just twenty.
Getting Will out of the car is, *thankfully*, rather easy. Richie is six feet something while Will's five feet *nothing* – the real obstacle is to not hit his head while he grabs Will in his arms.

And everything is going *fine*, Richie doesn't even drop the keys when he tries to open the door. Yes, everything is doing wonderfully – he manages to get past Mrs. B's bedroom without making too much noise, and stops by the kitchen to get a water bottle and some Nurofen.
When Richie opens his boyfriend's bedroom door, he's already thinking about the soft, *welcoming* bed, and yawns when he visualise it too clearly.

Only to open his eyes to *some guy* laying on this exact bed, asleep.

Fucking *Mike*.

Okay, and Will wasn't lying. If Richie had been younger, he would totally be tripping right now.
The dude is like some kind of messed up replica of Richie – he's actually happy to have his glasses back, if it means to look a little less alike.
Sure, they *are* different ; Richie's hair a little more messier, curlier, brown with sometimes honey-coloured highlights, while Mike's hair looks completely black, wavy bangs that he probably *combs* every morning.
Richie sets down Will on a nearby sofa and gets a little closer to Mike. The lights aren't fully on, so he can't really see any other differences – and it's *freaking* him out.

Okay, time to wake the guy up.

Richie's about to shake him, hands hovering over his shoulders when Mike's eyes snap open. It startles him, and he takes a step back, eyebrows raised.
Mike yawns. He sits up, rubbing his palm against his cheek.

« You're Richard ? »

Notes for the Chapter:

> but where is Oz ???? lmao he's sleeping w/ Joyce, bc Joyce loves him
>
> Anyway thank you for reading ! Hope it wasn't too bad lmao
> If you have anything to say (critics, advices, just saying if you liked or not, anything), i'll be happy to read it !
> Much love <3

3. Winner

Notes for the Chapter:

> OKAY SO
> first thing first sorry for not posting anything until now but I wanted to be at least satisfied with what I wrote so yea... this thing is kinda long (well more than I expected)
> And we have our boi Mike! YAY
> He's the main focus in this chap, because I wanted to talk about what he felt about his relationship with Will (and how did he end up in his bed, literally),,, so yea
> As always, I proof-read it myself so if you see any mistakes please let me now!
> Enjoy <3
> PS: songs bc i like songs : Wanted you by Twin Peaks or Calpurnia/Veins by Fyfe (Acoustic)

"So… San Francisco's treating you well?"

Mike resists the urge to slap himself. This has to be the dumbest thing he has asked yet, including "is the toilet paper different?".
Really, well played Michael. Exactly something you ask your best friend who had a crush on you when you're catching up over the phone, because he's literally on the other side of the United States.

It's a level of awkward Mike had never quite reached yet – every girl he had dated had probably never liked him as much as Will, and none of them were his best friend. Even El, the girl he loved for so long he once had thought he'll stay with forever, did not unnerve him as much when he saw her.
He knew he loved her, still, but just in a different way – while Will, with his kind heart and warm feelings that Mike never deserved, overwhelmed in a way he just couldn't deal with.

Will had once said that Mike was bad with sentiments, emotions – and it was all true. He usually acted upon his instincts and thought little about what he felt – what other felt.

It's Will's job, normally. Will is the wise one, the sensitive, brillant and perceptive like Mike will never be. It's Will that had talked Mike into apologizing to Max for being a jerk, it's Will that had helped El with her nightmares, it's Will that had cared the most for Dustin when he complained about girls – it's Will everytime, and Mike is convinced that he wouldn't be half the man he is if it wasn't for him.

He wished, oh he wished he had been able to love Will like he loved him, able to look him in the eyes and to feel what Will felt.
He hadn't even noticed it, his selfish teenage self too focused on things that didn't matter.
But eventually, he realized ; seeing Will crying, once he had said everything because eventually his heart couldn't bear beating like this for a minute longer – he saw how Will face was soft when he stared at him, how he smiled a smile so tender and gentle when it was for Mike, and Mike only. Never Dustin, or Lucas or even Jonathan or his mom – no, just Mike.

What had he done to merit such love?

Now, Mike couldn't be grossed out, nor disguted – he had actually promised to Will that they'd marry each other someday in kindergarden, inspired in the momemtum, complacent in the satisfaction to have gotten his first and best friend that looked up to him like Will did.
And it wasn't a matter of gender – he found some boys handsome, others beautiful, and among them Will was the prettiest of them all.

He just felt… inadaquate, he supposed, knowing Will gazed at him like he was the whole universe, while Mike had broken his heart a thousand time, and had never seen the tears fall.
He thinks – hopes – he loves him a little bit like him, though, because Mike knows he never loved anybody like he loves Will.

Yet it doesn't feel sufficient, it's not enough. And Mike doesn't want to become his father, he doesn't want to be the husband that doesn't care. It's why maybe he's shying away from this, whatever it is, whatever warmth he hold in his heart whenever Will is nearby.

Maybe Mike Wheeler is wrong. Maybe Mike Wheeler made the biggest mistake of his life.

"…Mike? You there? "

"Yeah sorry, spaced out for a minute." Mike forces a convicing laugh to come out of his throat. It's better than saying he's reconsidering his feelings for Will, and it isn't really a lie either. "What did you say?"

"I said it's great. I love it. And it's better than Hawkins, but that isn't hard," Mike makes an approving noise, and Will smiles.
Or Mike imagines he does – his voice says so, and Mike guesses he's also in a sweater, probably laying down or sketching, with this focused look on his face he often has whenever he's drawing.
He tries it.

"You're drawing?"
There's a soft laugh on the other end of the line. Mike grins.

"How do you know?"
"I know everything."

I'd like to. What are you thinking about, Will?

"Are you watching me right now, Mike?"

There's a teasing edge in Will's words, and Mike chuckles imagining himself spying on Will. He hears rustling on the other side of the line – probably Will sitting up, and Mike unconsciously mimics him, straightening up on the sofa, crossing his legs.

"No, I just know you that well." *I'm glad I do. I'm glad we still talk to each other. I'm glad we haven't drifted apart. But I miss you.* "But since we're talking about seeing each other..."

Untangling the phone's wire around his index unthinkinglly, Mike's voice trails off as he checks the time. *4pm*: ultimatly, he knows that his roomates are going to tease him – the result of the hours he spends on the phone – but he doesn't care, not when it's Will. Will's worth every second of his time, every homophobic slurs Daniel playfully throws in because people can't just understand what they aren't.

They fear the unknown ; spit on it when it's weaker than them to sneer upon it like a squished bug.

A thoughtful humming comes from Will, keeping Mike from thinking too much. He starts again where he left off, a little more uncertain than before, pausing to choose his words carefully.

"… you're coming back to Hawkins for Christmas, right?"

Asking this, a weight lifts off Mike's shoulders, and simultaneously his heart briefly stops beating. *What if Will doesn't want to come anymore? What if I never see him again?*
He bites in lips anxiously, apprehensive of Will's answer : he doesn't want what happened between them to hold them back – doesn't want to make it weird, or unpleasant – and more than anything, he just want to be at Will's side once again.

But Will bursts out laughing, startling Mike and comforting him at the same time. His eyes soften – his doubts are dumb, he knows. Will is brave, courageous. He wouldn't run away, and even if he did Mike wouldn't have ever blamed him.

"Of course I'll come! » Will snorts, « What, did you think I would have missed my favourite holiday with my favourite people?"

"No, 'twas just to make sure you weren't bailing on us," he huffs, fond and happy.

Suddenly, it's quiet. Will laugh died down.
It's a pleasant pause, the kind you have with someone you've known for such a long time that talking isn't something necessary anymore. He listens to Will's breathing, a regular rythm, soothing and familiar.
Mike's relieved – glad to still be able to stay with Will like that.

"Did I ever tell you about Richard?" Will abruptly breaks the silence, taking Mike aback.

Richard … *Who?*

"Who?" he voices, frowning.
"Richie. Um, Tozier?" Will mumbles, faintly sounding guilty.
The question in his words isn't uncertainty about the name – and Mike immediatly notices.

"What's happening ?"

"I, uh. We – *I mean*, I am…" there's a sharp intake of air. "We … are dating ? I *think*."

Mike stops thinking.

They're dating.

Richard.

A boy. A man.

"You think ?!" he only manages to spit out, speechless. He's astoundished, a bewildered expression on his face. But he feels numb, not mad – why would he be ? – and surprise himself by his harsh tone, instantaneously feeling bad for it.

His fingers reach for something invisible, the words on the tip of his tongue, but they quickly withdraw – he rubs his face tiredly.

He doesn't know why he's so shocked. Maybe it's because he never thought about it, Will with another man – *another man* …
He winces.

"I'm sorry."

"It's okay. You have the right to be surprised…" Will laughs it off. He always do. "I don't mind. It's not something I've expected either."

But Mike knows he's just pretending. He minds. It's not okay. Because Will should have expected to find someone who'll love him thoroughly – because Will shouldn't expect disgust or insults. Because it shouldn't be normal.

"No, no no, I'm so sorry Will. You deserve to be happy." Mike presses, clasping tightly the phone, mouth set in a hard line – he knows he has to say it, he wants to, to remind Will he's worth it.
"I wasn't expecting it, but I knew it would happen. You're amazing, Will. I'm glad you've found someone. I hope this guy knows how lucky he is," he tries to joke, but it's the truth. He hopes this guy knows he won something that all the gold in the world can't buy – the inestimable heart of Will Byers.

He lets out a shuddering breath ; he was wrong. He's mad – at himself, because he just can't be the highschool ass he was at sixteen. He can't be brash and impetuous anymore – he can't just say things like he thinks them.
He won't forgive himself if he hurts Will again.
He needs to be good to Will, he has to make sure Will understands that he deserves to be loved like he's a god, like his eyes are the most beautiful stars and like his smile's is a gift to be cherished – but Mike can't be the one to do that, not when he had been the one to make the tears fall. He's not allowed, it's not right.
Will has earned someone better for him than Mike – he'd earned someone that'll make him the happiest person on earth.

"Thanks, Mike." Will answers, with his soft, delighted singing voice – because that's all he needed, a little kindness.

"Tell me about this Richard?"

And Will does.

.

Mike prepares adequately for they arrival – from the day he arrives in his childhood home to the moment Joyce calls him to let him know that Will and his boyfriend landed safely, he tries to tell himself that it doesn't matter that Will has a boyfriend. That it didn't change anything. That it's more important that he's well and pleased.

But he can't.
The day Will arrives in Hawkins – two days before Lucas and Max, three before Dustin and four before El – Mike drowns himself into alcohol, emptying every bottle of his parents' liquor cabinet. He can't see him sober. Can't see them.

He wanted to – he had woke up with the intention of driving to the Byers' before the evening. To get it over with, to greet the boyfriend and realize that they were happy and that everything was good after all.
But his chest had hurt, like he was suffocating, like his lungs didn't have enough space to breathe, like the world was collapsing upon Mike.

Slave to his heartache, Mike had stayed at home, lulled by an old mixtape Will had made for him years ago. Sometimes, he left the drink he nursed to skim through a binder he had kept with memories inside, or he just took an old comic to read it again.

Slowly, the hours passed until it was nearly one in the morning, and Mike had left the bottles and memories to sprawl on the couch of his living room – giving up on the basement and fleeing the pain.

The music had stopped, and only the ticking of the old Wheeler's clock could be heard.
Head thrown back, Mike stared at the faint yellow stains on the ceiling, pupils flicking. He was humming, and occasionnaly opened his mouth to run his tongue along his teeth, tasting the booze.

Darling, you gotta let me know
Should I stay or should I go?

It appeared like everything clicked into place at one point, because Mike stood up, a stubborn expression carved into his features, a seemingly unwavering determination overtaking him.

He grabbed the keys to his car, a small white *VW Rabbit*, and stumbled through his home's door – luckily managing not to fall, but still wobbling in a typically inebriated fashion.

He was going to see Will.

Notes for the Chapter:

> DU DU DUUUN
> lmao this is some emo shit I wrote,,, what the fucc
> so yeah, our boi Mike is in deep shit! what's going to happen next??? who knows?? not me!
> no seriously, hope this isn't confusing (if it is, ask me!) or that their conversation isn't too awkwardly written (ahah,,,ah)
> leave a kudo or a review if you want to! (i LOVE reviews i live for them so don't hesitate (and if it's critics,,, that's even better))
> much love <3

4. Pursuit of Happiness

Notes for the Chapter:

> hi!!! guys!!! MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HANUKKAH, HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!
> fuck
> so sorry for the delay!! I explained everything on tumblr (@baba-ouba talk to me whenever so we can both scream about ST!!!) but short story: christmas + boarding school = NO
> so I couldn't write all!! but now! there it is!
> - as always, I don't have a beta, so point me any mistakes you find, and ... welp, enjoy! i hope!!

"You're Ri–Richard?" Michael Wheeler repeats, as if Richie had not heard him the first time – and he *gapes*, because *fuck*, this guy is completely wasted. He hadn't noticed at first, but Mike's carefully combed hair is a little greasy, his eyes are hazy, yet it's still nothing compared to the bags under them – black and purple, hollowing his face.

At Richie's lack of answer, Mike tries to stand, but it seems like one of his leg is giving up on him, so he just trips over himself and clings to Richie in a desperate attempt to avoid falling, which is plain *awkward* – because Richie's just there, both of his hands up in the air like he's got a *fucking* gun on him or something, while fucking Mike latches onto him like a three years old could.

Richie does what he does best. He laughs. *Uneasily*.
He's finally glad to have his glasses back, because he can now push them back on the bridge of his nose, like he used to – a nervous tic –, to, *you know*, compose himself. He gets ahold of Mike, too, clumsily, one hand gripping his *(holy shit, fucking ugly)* turtleneck sweater. The other is lifting him up by his underarm, because Mike apparently cannot stay upright without Richie's help.

"Okay big guy, let's get you to bed..." he says, mumbling, trying to coax him out of the room.

"No! I wanna… I wanna talk to you," Mike slurs, apparently not agreeing. He grips Richie's shoulders. "To you. Okay?" he says, with the soft intonation of an hesitant kid. And then he looks up and stares at Richie like they've known each other *forever*, which is really fucking possible because they could be twins, after all.

And Richie answers "okay", because he's *kind and adaptable* like that, but also because if Will was easy to carry, Mike's the same size as Richie and he's not going to risk breaking a bone just to help Mike to bed.
So they move to the Byers' porch, the old wodden thing creaking under their footsteps while Richie shushes Mike who laughs all the way through *(for nothing)*, and really, Richie should be paid for this, because he certainly ain't a good fairy – or at least not literally.

The night is pleasing. The sky is clear, the moon, bright; and it makes the world seems bigger and quieter as its shine enlights the woods. And in this blue light, Richie and Mike settle against each other, the former more awkardly than the latter.
There's emptiness, for a moment, just a void broken by the chirruping of some birds, but it's not enough for Richie, who squirms under the heavy silence. He clears his throat, lighting up a smoke – taking a puff on it.

"You want one?" he hold it out for Mike to take it, but he shakes his head.

"'M good, thanks."

Richie clicks his tongue, shrugging. "Your choice, Wheela. *Anyway...*" he runs a hand through his already tousled hair, side-eyeing him. "Do you happen to know if your mom met my dad, or was it the opposite? 'Cause we gotta face it, we *totally* look like we came out of the same bearded oyster, if you know what I mean."

Mike blinks slowly at him.

"*What?*"

Here we go. That's Richie's speciality: being funny's *his* game.
"Ye know, the *cave of wonders*? The *baby cannon*? The *tampon tunnel*?"

he makes a face, waving and gesturing, insisting on each word with a terrible scottish accent. "Ring any bells to ye?" At Mike's blank look, Richie huffs. "Well, yer oot yer face, *fella*!"

But there's the beginning of a smile showing up on Mike's face and Richie's satisfied.

"...'re you…" Mike's rubbing his eyelids with his hand, trying maybe to wipe the alcohol out of himself – it's written on his features, the *exhaustion*, and it doesn't take a genius to see it.
Richie wonders how long was he waiting for Will, and if it was even Mrs. B. that opened the door for him or if he just broke in.

Whatever, Richie's reading too much into this shit.
He refocuses, crossing his legs, blowing the smoke out of his mouth slowly. He can hear Mike breathing next to him, and the moment drags on.

"Are yuh… tulkin' bout' … a vagina?"

It shouldn't be *that* hilarious, *(but he said it so casually!)* yet Richie still barks a laughter, a delighted expression on his face. And Mike laughs too, because Richie's got that contagious laughter – it's like AIDS, everyone's catching it.
They look at each other, chuckling, and the second after they're both cracking up.

Probably laughing about the absurdity of the situtation rather than something else. Frankly, it's a mix between *hysteria* and *hilarity* – a least for Richie. (He's like that, he knows. Thinking too much, *too fast*, freaking out easily. And he wonders if Mike's the same.)

He laughs because Will's just next door, because they're so fucking similar, because Mike's fucking drunk and Richie completly *done*.

It's an odd sort of friendship that's perhaps, *perhaps*, starting – eased by a connection, and the feeling they've known each other for the longest time. They must be linked, *bound* together by some sort of mystical… fucking destiny, or whatever.

There's silence, once they've finished laughing, and this time it's

comfortable.

It comes as a surprise to Richie, really. He expected to be *angry* at the guy, maybe even a *little* jealous, but Richie's weak for the people who don't hate him – the people who laugh at his jokes, and not *at him*.
It's what remains from his childhood, he thinks, and that's why Richie instantly cannot hate the guy like he thought he would. So what if he's dumb and likes pussies? Richie can even thank him for his mistake. So what if he looks like him? Will has a type, after all.

Lucky Richie, 'cause he has Will *all for himself* now.

And even if Micheal Wheeler had been Will first crush, or *whatever* their relationship had been, there wasn't someone you could trust more than William Byers – so as long as Will kept looking at Richie with his ever-loving, *tender* eyes, the ones that said everything, that promised him the whole universe if he wanted it and Will's *entiere* devotion, then he couldn't be jealous.

He thinks it's a little sad for Mike, actually, because he missed out something more *wonderful* than anything he could ever experience. Truly, being the center of Will's affection was a blessing – more than anything he could have wished for.

Richie taps the ashes off his cigarette, watching the small red particles being whisked away – he pictures Will, still asleep in the sofa, peacefully dreaming, he hopes. It pacifies him, thinking about Will always do.
He breathes deeply, closing his eyes for more than a second – his hand behind him rubbing against the wood as he leans back.

"You're funny, *Mikey Mouse*. Obviously, not as much as me, but nobody's perfect, heh?" he takes a drag on his smoke, "So, what do you want to tell to *lil' old* me?"

Mike's back rests against one of the porch's post. He got his arms folded, to warm himself up, and his eyes are half-closed. He looks like he's going to fall asleep anytime now. But still, he speaks up.

"I...," he exhales, staring at the fog coming out of his mouth. "I wanted to, to… see Will, first. But I know, *I know* you're together. I

know you're..." he falters.

"*Fucking*? Doing the do together?" Richie adds –waggling his eyebrows– just to fuck with him, but it doesn't seem to help as Mike stammers, "I meant, uh,– b–boyfriends?"

Alright, time to be indulging, Trashmouth.

"Okay," he says, but at the same time, he want to ask so many questions.

Why the fuck are you talking to me if you wanted to see Will?

Why did you want to see him?

Why are you here?

Why did you get drunk?

His whole body *itches*, as it usually does whenever Richie's feeling restless, and he notices just now that his knee is bouncing up and down, and that he's playing with his own fingers.

Mike sighs, and Richie looks up. "And… I know I fucked up. Did Will tell you? That I fucked up?" he whispers, bashful.

"He didn't," Richie lies.

"Really?"

And Mike seems so *nervous*, fingering the cuffs of his sleeves. It pains Richie, even though they barely know each other. He stumbles and stutters with the heavy speech of a drunk man; struggling with his words, face softened by his feeling – Richie remembers that he once knew a boy like that, too, when he was younger. A boy carrying his heart on his sleeve, but that could hardly put his feelings into clear words.

He pushes his glasses back, once more.

Undoubtely, it would be easier to just say *yes*, but he caves in, somehow taking pity of him. It's hard not to, anyway, when they're

looking so alike, *acting* so alike – two bundle of nerves.

Richie stretches his legs before him, letting them dangle above the grass. "Okay, he did. He told me."

"Does he hate me?" Mike doesn't sound surprised. Maybe just even *more* sad.

Richie guffaws, stubbing his smoke out on the wood, "No, he doesn't." Because if he's certain of one thing, it's that William cannot really hate anyone, and especially his best friend.

Mike's eyes are wet, and Richie awkwardly shifts from where he's sitting down to pat his arm.

"You think so?"

"I *know* so. I'm Richie *motherfucking* Tozier," he assures, and it seems that's enough for Mike, because he snorts but stays quiet, thoughtful.

"I thought you were called Richard?"

"That's what Will calls me, most of the time. Says it makes me sound more serious."

"Doesn't he like your jokes?"

"Oh, he *loves* them. He just likes me serious in bed," smirks Richie, looking smug. And then, with his eyes wide opened in a parody of William Byers, he proceeds to moan and to whine like he often hears, in a slightly more high-pitched voice than his own, *"Ah! Richard! Harder! Aah!"*

Mike's dumbfounded, and Richie laughs, and everything's good.

"Richie, honey? Is that you?"

Or maybe he just should have shut up.

Beep-beep, Richie.

There's an uncomfortable moment where they hear footsteps and see

the lights turning on. Richie's stuck, unmoving, *frozen* by the cold winter or maybe by the voice of *fucking Joyce Byers*that had just heard him imitating her son getting *fucked*. Maybe it would have been better for Richie to be caught balls deep in Will's ass rather than this. At least, they would have been two to be embarassed, and the outcome would have *stayed* enjoyable.

He curses the thin wall of the Byers' house *–he wasn't even speaking loudly!–* and croaks, probably ashamed for the first time in his life.

"Yes, Mrs. B.?"

Joyce opens the door, and she's just there with blanket around her shoulder, looking tired but smiling all the same. She makes a sound when she sees Mike, eyes flickering to Richie once more, and Richie can *fully* relate.

"*Mike*! Sweetie, what are you doing here?" she beams, and Richie thanks god and every fucking deity he knows of – he swears he'll start being a good, pious man from now on, because *holy shit*, it's a fucking miracle Mrs. B. had not heard what had came out of Richie's mouth.

"Just… *passing by*, you know, Mrs. Byers," Mike pipes up, voice breaking in the middle of his sentence, and Richie sees how much he's restraining himself to not burst out laughing. Asshole.

"How many times did I tell you to call me Joyce?"

"Sorry, Joyce."

"It's alright, honey. Now, what are boys doing, staying outside like this? You should come inside, I'm making hot chocolate!"

Neither ask why she's making hot chocolate at this hour – they both know about the nightmares that plagues her nights, and how she sometimes used to watch Will sleep when he was younger, reassuring herself with his presence. But they both agree, Richie fiercely nodding to quickly forget this incident, and Mike affirmatively humming, wiping his now running nose, a relieved expression on his face. His eyes still burns, unshed tears kept at bay, but a weight is lifted off his shoulders.

He knows why he came here in the first place, strangely able to think straight in the haze induced by the alcohol – but, but… seeing Richie, talking a little with him had made it, *maybe*, a little bit easier to let go.

Maybe there wasn't even anything to let go. Maybe it has been Mike that had been foolish all along.

He had so dearly hoped that he was still holding a place in Will's heart – but maybe he hadn't even lost it.

Notes for the Chapter:

> So! what did you think?? I'm not very happy with this chapter, but you know i tried lmao!
> its really frustrating to write in english too, like??? how tf do I use that word? I swear thesaurus is always on my tab, along with wordreference :O anyway!!
>
> Thank you for reading guys!!
> leave a review, whatever you want to say!! it always means a lot to me < 3
> (@baba-ouba)
>
> ps: the "wheela" nickname is from ActionGerard's "In Bloom" fic!! Be sure to check it out if you haven't, it's amazing!